

U.S. WEIGHING SAIGON SHIFT

Takes Exception To Goldwater's Peace Forecast

By PAUL W. WARD

(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, Aug. 27—The State Department reserved judgment here today on the value of the latest governmental shake-up in strife-ridden South Vietnam.

It also took exception to the prediction of an East-West peace settlement before November 3 for that part of Southeast Asia which Senator Goldwater, the Republican Presidential nominee, made to newsmen aboard his yacht off Newport Beach, Cal., yesterday.

The department spoke in both cases through Robert J. McCloskey, its acting chief press officer.

"No Information"

Asked this afternoon for an evaluation of an eight-hour-old report from Saigon, announcing formation there of a triumvirate of generals to rule South Vietnam for the next two months or more, McCloskey said he could offer no "substantive comments."

Stressing that press reports from Saigon are running far ahead of official dispatches from the United States Embassy, which Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor hears there, McCloskey added:

"We have no information that General (Nguyen) Khanh has ever relinquished the post of Premier.

"However," he continued, "we as yet have no analysis from the embassy as to the nature of the most recent action of the military Revolutionary Council (set up at Saigon last November when the Diem regime that had ruled there for ten years was overthrown)."

Asserting also that Washington had not been consulted in advance of the council's decision and that no Americans were present at its meetings, McCloskey added:

"We are satisfied, however, that the (62) members of the council have been diligently seeking a solution which they believe best to meet their difficulties, and we

hope, of course, that this will restore law and order."

When newsmen suggested the qualifying phrase "which they believe" might be construed as implying that "we think otherwise," McCloskey said he did not want to leave that or "any (other) implication." The department just does not have enough information to "make any analysis at this time," he stressed.

Goldwater Remarks

He was questioned next about remarks about the South Vietnam situation that Senator Goldwater has been making over the last two days.

McCloskey had responded with a "no comment" when asked yesterday about the Arizona Republican's admonition in a speech at Cleveland the previous day that the American electorate had better brace itself for a Johnson Administration announcement "in the near future" that it had made a "negotiated peace" in South Vietnam.

McCloskey showed no such compunction when questioned this afternoon about Senator Goldwater's elaboration of that theme yesterday. Asked if he had any reaction to the Republican nominee's assertion that the Johnson Administration is moving toward some sort of negotiated settlement, he asserted: "The United States Government is not engaged in any such negotiations as the Senator speaks of."

Under further questioning, McCloskey said it is "equally not so" that the Administration is moving toward or preparing for such negotiations.

Asked whether Senator Goldwater is getting intelligence briefings from Washington on the situation, he said he knew only that "opportunity for briefings in the executive branch has been extended to him in the past."

Serious Doubt

Newsmen who questioned Senator Goldwater yesterday reported that his views stemmed from a 45-page monograph entitled "Trends in the World Situation" prepared by a member of the Central Intelligence Agency's Board of National Estimates.

In its section dealing with South Vietnam, the monograph said:

"The counter-guerrilla effort continues to flounder, partly because of the inherent difficulty of the problem and partly because Diem's successors have not yet demonstrated the leadership and inspiration necessary. There remains serious doubt that victory can be won, and the situation remains very fragile.

"If large-scale United States support continues and if further political deterioration within South Vietnam is prevented, at least a prolonged stalemate can be attained. There is also a chance that political evolution within the country and developments upon the world scene could lead to some kind of negotiated settlement based upon neutralization."

Learning that a Midwest newspaper backing Senator Goldwater was about to feature such excerpts from the monograph in its Sunday editions, officials here made copies available to newsmen Friday night.

As additional counter-measures, they stressed that the monograph did not represent Government policy; that it set forth only the individual views of Willard Mat-

thias, its author, and that it had never been submitted to the National Security Council or to the United States Intelligence Board, which prepares intelligence estimates for that White House council.

They also said the monograph had been written some six months ago and not only circulated thereafter in the lower echelons of several Federal agencies but offered for publication to a national magazine which rejected it.

Rusk Statements

It was emphasized that Dean Rusk, Secretary of State, repeatedly had spoken out in recent press conferences and television appearances against any such East-West negotiations over South Vietnam as Moscow, Peking and Hanoi have been demanding.

Noting also that Rusk had declared before the Democratic party's Platform Committee here on August 17 that "in Southeast Asia . . . we have made it plain that the aggressions of Hanoi and Peking will be defeated," they added assurances as of last Friday night that:

1. The Johnson Administration will not engage in any East-West negotiations looking toward the creation at Saigon of such a troika-type government for South Vietnam as was prescribed for Laos by a conference of fourteen nations, including the United States and Communist China, at Geneva in 1961-1962.

No Involvement

2. The Johnson Administration also will not involve the United States in any East-West negotiations as to whether North Vietnam's Communist regime and its Chinese Communist backers should keep their hands off South Vietnam and especially not in any recognition of a right on the Communists' part to attach conditions to compliance by them with their 1954 Geneva contract to let South Vietnam alone.

Senator Goldwater's prognosis in respect to South Vietnam — based, he said, on "what my political bones tell me" — included a prediction that there will be just such a "dishonorable settlement" as the one that was prescribed for Laos with the Kennedy Administration's assent and that the Johnson Administration is trying to maintain there.

Officials here said last Friday night that the Laotian and Vietnamese situations are entirely different and that they would not, therefore, entertain any proposal for putting South Vietnam under a troika-type government made up in equal parts of Communists, anti-Communists and neutralists.